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Communications Department
Royal United Hospital
Combe Park
Bath
BA1 3NG

Tel: 01225 826230 / 821459
Mobile: 07557 756658 (office hours)

Ruh-tr.communicationteam@nhs.net
www.ruh.nhs.uk
<https://twitter.com/RUHBath>

Media Release

RUH researchers join important new COVID-19 study

Researchers at the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust are inviting volunteers to take part in an important new study looking at whether booster COVID-19 vaccines could be given at the same time as flu vaccines.

While there are vaccines that have been approved to protect against COVID-19 in the UK, it is not yet known whether further booster doses may be required to give continued protection, and how giving boosters might fit in with the seasonal flu jab programme.

Research teams at the RUH are joining the ComFluCOV vaccine study, which will run from 29 March, to look at the side effects and immune response when people receive their COVID-19 booster and flu vaccine at the same appointment.

Dr Kelly Spencer, RUH Head of Research Operations, said: "The volunteers we recruit at the RUH will be playing a crucial role in the wider global effort to continue to protect people against both COVID-19 and flu in the future, both of which can seriously affect the most vulnerable in society. We're really proud as a Trust to be involved in this important study and we welcome those who would like to take part."

This study forms part of a larger programme of research into treatments and vaccines for COVID-19 ongoing at the RUH.

The study will involve people aged 18 years old or over who have received their first COVID-19 vaccination and are awaiting their second dose. Each participant will receive the second dose of the same COVID-19 vaccine they originally received. It will look to recruit 504 participants across six NHS sites: The Royal United Hospitals Bath, Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, North Bristol NHS Trust, Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust, Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust and UHBW.

For more information about the study and how to sign up, visit the vaccine trial website: <https://comfluov.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/>

Ends

Notes to Editor:

The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust provides acute treatment and care for a catchment population of around 500,000 people in Bath, and the surrounding towns and villages in North East Somerset and Western Wiltshire. The hospital provides healthcare to the population served by four Clinical Commissioning Groups: Bath & North East Somerset CCG, Wiltshire CCG, Somerset CCG and South Gloucestershire CCG.

The Trust provides 759 beds and a comprehensive range of acute services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.

In 2015 The Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust acquired the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) NHS Foundation Trust. The RNHRD treats patients from across the country offering services in rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME, cancer related fatigue and fatigue linked to other long term conditions such as multiple sclerosis.

The RUH is changing - we have an exciting programme of redevelopment underway transforming our site and further improving the services we provide. The Trust has opened the purpose-built RNHRD and Brownsword Therapies Centre and is now working towards the new Dyson Cancer Centre. For more details visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit_for_the_future

For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: www.ruh.nhs.uk